

**9/11, Trauma and Literature: Wendell Berry's *In the Presence of Fear* and Ken Kalfus's *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country***

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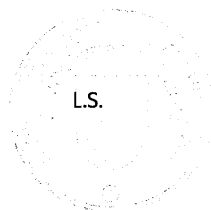
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## **ABSTRAKT**

Literatura má mnoho podob a rolí. Je tu s námi už hodně dlouhou dobu. Jednou z mnoha funkcí literatury, mimo jiné, je pomoci lidem překonat jejich trauma, vyrovnat se s tím. Proto se mnoho autorů a čtenářů obrací k tomuto typu literatury, která se zabývá traumatem, když se stane nějaká strašná událost. Cílem této práce je zhodnotit, jestli a jak pomáhá literatura zabývající se traumatem lidem, kteří zažili trauma, v tomto případě trauma jedenáctého září. Práce je rozdělena na dvě části. Teoretická část obsahuje informace o souvisejících pojmech a tématech. Začíná vysvětlením o traumatu, co je to trauma, a zjišťuje, odkud tento koncept pochází - šok z výbuchu granátu, vojáci vracení se domů z války ve Vietnamu. Poté následuje popis, jak je trauma používáno dnes. Dalším bodem je jedenácté září, konkrétně proč je to bráno jako americké trauma, které otřáslo národem. V neposlední řadě je část zabývající se tím, jak můžeme chápat literaturu zabývající se traumatem. Všechno tyto body jsou tu proto, aby nám umožnili lépe porozumět a uvést nás do kontextu druhé části, což je analýza a popis dvou knih s tematikou jedenáctého září vybraných jako příklad.

Klíčová slova: literatura, trauma, jedenácté září, šok způsobený granátem, vietnamští vojáci, Wendell Berry, Ken Kalfus

## **ABSTRACT**

Literature has many forms and many roles. It has been here for a long time. One of its many functions, besides others, is to help people deal with their trauma, to come to terms with it. That is why many authors and readers turn to the literature dealing with trauma when some terrible events happen. The purpose of this thesis is to evaluate if and how the literature dealing with trauma helps people affected by traumatic events, in this case the 9/11 tragic event. The thesis is divided into two parts. The theoretical part contains information about relevant terms and themes. Starting with explanation of trauma, what it is, and exploring where does the concept come from - shell shock and returning Vietnam soldiers. This is followed by a description of how the trauma is used nowadays. Next point focuses on 9/11, specifically why is it an American trauma that shocked the nation. Last but not least, is a part about how we can understand literature dealing with trauma. All this

is to help us understand and put us in the context of the second part, which is an analysis and description of two books about 9/11 chosen as an example.

Keywords: literature, trauma, 9/11, shell shock, Vietnam soldiers, Wendell Berry, Ken Kalfus

I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.



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## INTRODUCTION

The reason why I have chosen this theme is because 9/11 is one of the most tragic, shocking catastrophes in our history. It was a terrible blow to the U.S. citizens, especially those in New York. Many questions arise surrounding this event, contemplations about how it could have happened, what was it like and so on.

Imagine waking up to a beautiful morning of a sunny day. It may seem like any other typical day or it can be a special day, depends on each person how they view it. Having a good morning breakfast, and after breakfast any other activity like going to work, going outside for a walk, staying home, watching television, listening to a radio and many more. However, that day of September 11 was a same day for everyone in the USA. A day filled with terror, despair, hopelessness, surprise, shock. Nobody was expecting an attack, least of all an attack of planes crashing into the World Trade Center. Who would not be surprised. Why and how could anyone attack USA on its own land. People believed in a homeland security, thus the attack had an even greater impact. No one knows how it could happen. Thousands of people died that day, many more were injured, and by injured meaning not only physical wounds, but also psychical ones.

Those who were lucky enough to survive this tragic event were marked, carrying it with them. It takes a very long time to deal with such horrible events. People not only in New York, but also throughout the USA were shocked, surprised and terrified when they found out about the World Trade Center, either via TV, radio, or from their friends. They may not be as traumatised as those in New York, or perhaps they were. Still everyone in the USA was affected by this disastrous event, and months after they were keeping to expect another attacks, because if it happened once, it could happen again. They were also in a stage of fighting their trauma and in a process of self-care. Many people sought many ways of how to deal with their trauma. Whether it was a help of a psychiatrist, seeking guidance of loved ones, or finding comfort in literature and art. Everyone probably has some rough idea what trauma might be and how to deal with it. However, the real question is, whether they manage to overcome their trauma or not.

## **I. THEORY**

## 1 TRAUMA

When we say trauma, we usually imagine some negative experience affecting a mental state. It is more or less an emotional response which usually occurs when people experienced some kind of violence, abuse, neglect, disaster, or any form of trauma, and what they had to go through has a strong effect on how they view the world, health, and behaviour. Each person has a different way of how to deal with the trauma. And if we want to help them as best we can, to move on with their lives, we should find out not what's wrong, but what happened? Trauma can be considered a nearly versatile experience of people struggling with their health and mental conditions, because even when multiple people are affected by the same event, it has a dissimilar impact on each of them and each of them deals with it differently. Some try to understand their emotions and responses to help them cope, others choose to write about it, they seek a psychologist and so on.

Many of us will experience some kind of trauma during our lifetime. Sometimes, we escape with no long-term effects. But for millions of us, those experiences linger, causing symptoms like flashbacks, nightmares and negative thoughts that interfere with everyday life. This phenomenon, called post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, isn't a personal failing; rather, it's a treatable malfunction of certain biological mechanisms that allow us to cope with dangerous experiences.

To Deal with a traumatic event is often not easy, as such events can many times overpower us, and reduce one's ability to cope with the stress they create. On top of that is the long lasting of the traumatic reactions that, in various cases, can last for months, or even years, after the event. It depends on the type of trauma people are suffering, whether they will feel better relatively quickly, with only infrequent trying relapses, or not. Severe trauma, however, is something else. It is vital to identify what impact it has on someone's life, and to find help as soon as possible. After experiencing a very disquieting or minatory event, which may likely cause trauma, it is natural to feel distressed and overwhelmed. Traumatic events encompass actual or threatened death, grave injury to oneself or another person, or a menace to the personal beliefs of oneself or others. Examples involve vicious assaults (like sexual or physical assault, or mugging), torture, and grave car accidents. Also refugees who are forced to flee their homes because of war and political problems can be impacted by a stress cognated to trauma.

Reaction to trauma is often resembled by a severe stress response, which is a short-lasting state that appears after experiencing a traumatic event. The symptoms commence within

minutes of the stressful event and can vanish within hours, days, or weeks. Alternatively, as mentioned above, they can suffer from so called post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which lasts long and it is an anxiety reaction that comes after a traumatic or disastrous event. PTSD generally appears within six months of the traumatic event.

To understand PTSD, we first need to understand how the brain processes a wide range of ordeals, including the death of a loved one, domestic violence, injury or illness, abuse, rape, war, car accidents and natural disasters. These events can bring on feelings of dangers and helplessness, which activate the brain's alarm system, known as the „fight-flight-freeze“ response. When this alarm sounds, the hypothalamic, pituitary, and adrenal systems, known as the HPA axis, work together to send signals to the parasympathetic nervous system. That is the network that communicates with adrenal glands and internal organs to help regulate functions like heart rate, digestion, and respiration. These signals start a chemical cascade that floods the body with several different hormones, causing physiological changes that prepare the body to defend itself. Our heart rate speeds up, breathing quickens, and muscles tense. Even after a crisis is over, escalated levels of stress hormones may last for days, contributing to jittery feelings, nightmares and other symptoms. For most people, these experiences disappear within a few days to two weeks as their hormone levels stabilize. But a small percentage of those who experience trauma have persistent problems – sometimes vanishing temporarily only to resurface months, or sometimes years later. People do not completely understand what is happening in the brain, but one theory is that the stress hormone cortisol may be continuously activating the „fight-flight-freeze“ response while reducing overall brain functioning, leading to a number of negative symptoms. These symptoms often fall into four categories: intrusive thoughts, like dreams and flashbacks, avoiding reminders of the trauma, negative thoughts and feelings, like fear, anger, and guilt, and „reactive“ symptoms like irritability and difficulty sleeping. Not everyone has all these symptoms, or experiences them to the same extent and intensity. When problems last more than a month, PTSD is often diagnosed, genetics, ongoing overwhelming stress, and many risk factors like preexisting mental illnesses or lack of emotional support, likely play a role in determining who will experience PTSD. But the underlying cause is still a medical mystery.

A major challenge of coping with PTSD is sensitivity to triggers, physical and emotional stimuli that the brain associates with the original trauma. These can be everyday sensations that are not inherently dangerous but prompt powerful physical and emotional reactions.

For example, the smell of a campfire could evoke the memory of being trapped in a burning house. For someone with PTSD, that memory activates the same neurochemical cascade as the original event. That then stirs up the same feelings of panic and helplessness as if they're experiencing the trauma all over again. Trying to avoid these triggers, which are sometimes unpredictable, can lead to isolation. That can leave people feeling invalidated, ignored or misunderstood, like a pause button has been pushed on their lives while the rest of the world continues around them. But, there are options. If you think you might be suffering from PTSD, the first step is an evaluation with a mental health professional who can direct you towards the many resources available. Psychotherapy can be very effective for PTSD, helping patients better understand their triggers. And certain medications can make symptoms more manageable, as can self-care practices, like mindfulness and regular exercise. What if you notice signs of PTSD in a friend or family member? Social support, acceptance, and empathy are key to helping and recovery. Let them know you believe their account of what they are experiencing, and that you do not blame them for their reactions. If they are open to it, encourage them to seek evaluation and treatment. PTSD has been called „the hidden wound“, because it comes without outward physical signs. But even if it is an invisible disorder, it does not have to be a silent one.

It is customary for people to keep having disquieting feelings and a mess in their head for several days, or weeks, after the trauma. These are all common things, and they signalize that the body is recuperating from an acute stress. The most common observed reactions to trauma are concern or fear of peril to self or people who the person loves; being all alone; being in other horrifying situations; having much the same event occur again; steering clear of circumstances or thoughts reminding the traumatic event; being easily scared by strident noises or unexpected movements

There is also something called a historical trauma. Typical features of the historical trauma are collectiveness, cumulateness, affective wounding stretching over and across generations resulting from hulking cataclysmic events. The difference is that these events do not affect an individual as much but rather a whole collective community. It can be for example a constrained relocation from long-established homelands. But what communities talk a lot about concerns a process that the trauma is held personally and can be carried over generations. This means even members of a family who have not been directly affected by the trauma itself can still have a feeling of the impact of that event generations

later. One might ask whether historical trauma affects only certain groups of people? The answer is not as simple as it would seem, but rather complex. The thing is that historical trauma is actually an occurrence of many communities, aboriginal communities, people all over the world who have sort of struggled with it. It is not something that is specific to tribal people or aboriginal people. It is enunciated all over the world. Historical trauma is spread wide, having an effect on many communities across the globe. And it passes on across generations.

### **1.1 Shell Shock**

Throughout our history there were many cases causing trauma but among these also major events causing a great deal of trauma. One of these major events when trauma was studied more deeply was during WWI, because till that time it was the most brutal and worldwide conflict in the history. The war on the Western Front was different from any war fought before. New machines dominated the fighting, modern factories produced gas and high explosives used for the first time on an industrial scale. Sustained shelling caused horrific injuries and dismemberment, testing the endurance of Britain's soldiers, not only Britain but French and German armies alike. No one from new recruits to experienced officers was prepared for trench warfare. Traditional ideas of courage and cowardice were slowly eroded as the misery of the conflict took its toll. From the very outset casualties were heavy, soldiers returning from the front were overwhelmed by the brutality of this war. The war destroyed bodies and also crippled minds. Many people were affected by this event and events in between. One particular phenomenon occurred during this time. The doctors call it a shell shock, which has caught the military and medical establishment completely off-guard. To the army's alarm more and more cases of shell shock began to appear. As the name suggests, it was concerning people who were exposed to a great amount of shells exploding around them. Shell shock is a catch-all term, it is a descriptor used to describe the symptoms suffered by men fighting in the WWI. It can cover anything from stammering, loss of memory, irritability to full-blown nervous breakdown, nervousness and inability and at the same time also functional neuroses such as hysterical deafness or hysterical blindness, yet without an apparent cause other than their proximity to bombardment. So it is not medically a helpful term as people recognized at the time but it was an emotionally important term that made sense to people.

One might suspect that men were using the term shell-shocked right at the beginning of the WWI, but it was neither in evidence nor in print until February 1915, and after that point

the term shell-shocked, what was very widely used and it makes sense, because it creates a very graphic illustration of the battlefield, it creates a strong connection between the exploding shell and the shock in the man, also it is tied into a sort of old soldiers law. Soldiers used to talk about the wind of the shell before the WWI, that a man very close to an exploding shell or if a man for example had a bullet whizzed past his ear, he could after that point become mentally disturbed in some way, because the changing air pressure had affected the fluid in the brain and this is why old soldiers talked about being windy or having the wind up if they were excessively afraid. So the term shell-shocked has some kind of a connection to this old soldiers belief in the wind of the shell and it simply made sense to so many people, despite military authorities trying to outlaw it, people continued to use it and continued to use it throughout the war and afterwards. But why did military authorities try to ban the term? Because it is medically imprecise. Someone who is suffering from for example hysterical deafness is not suffering in the same way as someone suffering from amnesia, or someone suffering from stammering. It is also medically imprecise in, that the men did not necessarily suffer mental complaints, because of a direct contact with an exploding shell. It might be weeks and weeks of cold and anxiety and hunger, it might be the conditions of trench life, or it might be an extreme fear.

There are just so many different reasons behind a man's breakdown, that to attribute the breakdown to the shock of a shell is simply too simplistic. Soldier's unconscious minds so distressed by war crippled their bodies and took them out of the fighting. Shell shock is tied up with masculinity, because to be a man, to be essentially masculine with his working class or whether he is from one of the elite classes, the central tenet of masculinity is to control one's emotions and clearly shell shock men were not controlling their emotions and so there is a loss of masculinity implied in shell shock, but if he had been a good soldier, if he had shown bravery, his mental collapse was not seen as shameful and diaries of soldiers indicate, that they did care for their friends, they nurtured them, if they thought they were showing the symptoms of incipient breakdown, they would go out of their way to protect them. So shell shock in some cases could be seen as a respectable war wound. The military found it hard to accept such a radical theory, it undermined the belief that men could and should control their fears and emotions. Officers who had not been affected in large numbers were beginning to break down when confronted by the loss of so many of their men.



Shell shock was creating a loss of manpower and this slowly but surely became more and more obvious, but it became blindingly obvious when so many men broke down. The army authorities could not ignore this anymore, they had actually been working towards this, hiring doctors and so. It had been learned from previous wars that disease, injuries they could certainly cut the manpower down, but now they had to accept that the psychological response to warfare could do the same.

There are mentioned old soldiers above, but was shell shock thought of as a young soldier's problem? For many of the contemporaries trying to understand shell shock, they were of course dealing with young men, and a lot of the publicity surrounding the early shell-shocked dealt with boys. In some of newspaper accounts appeared tales of all sorts of men and poor trembling boys, and this was used during the war to attract sympathy for those sufferers and as a result, it has given people a rather skewed understanding of shell-shocked.

There was no telling who would be affected by it or why. Those who suffered from it might be hypnotized or electrocuted, rested or shot, all for the same illness. So many men were lost to it, would be a revolution in military attitudes and a new field of medicine created. These suffering men whose minds the dead have ravished, memory fingers in their hair of murders, multitudinous murders they once witnessed. Moreover, people assume it is associated with a very young boy, who cannot fight, but some men become extremely aggressive and violent, when they suffer from the shell shock. After the war people tended to get more stories about these very negative perceptions of shell-shocked men. Some sort of change took place in the years following the war's end as there was less sympathy for wounded men generally, whereas the poor nerve rick boy is a sympathetic figure, while the mentally disturbed man is a frightening one. Nonetheless the consequence of this resulted in people being constantly afraid, terrified, not knowing whether the next explosion will be the mortal one. Everyone was affected no matter their nationality. Doctors believed at first, that these affected people were just crazy, fitted to be put in an asylum, but deeper studies showed they were not demented, but suffering from traumatic events caused by the war. Those who survived had it very hard to get back to the normal life they had before the war, often ending up in hospitals with special care, became homeless and so on.

## 1.2 Returning Vietnam soldiers

Another big event where trauma has taken its toll was during the Vietnam War. This especially affected American soldiers returning from the war. The Vietnam War was one of the major defeats the U.S. suffered because they did not have entangled support, not much understanding of the invasion and battle, nor an unambiguous direction and auspicious outcome like in wars before. They were simply not prepared to wage a war there, marching into an unknown territory with different climate. Many soldiers were oblivious what and why they fight and in the end all these factors contributed to their downfall. Again when the war ended, just like any other war, the returning soldiers found themselves struggling to live a normal life after they arrival back to America.

When soldiers went to Vietnam they were actually human beings, they fought for years and spent as much time in the bush, they sort of speaking turned into animals. They probably did not even realize how much they changed, that till they came back they hear again car noises, horns and other city noises. Their nerves were shot, they were not sure what will happen, scared to death of everything so they acted kind of strange when they came home because they were just plucked out of a combat in jungle environment in a shootout, a plane arrived and they went home. It took about fifteen years before the last of the US troops departed from the Vietnam soil but since then thousands of veterans who served their nation so valiantly discovered it almost impossible to lead a normal productive lives. Many of them were distraught lonely suffering from the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD which plagues many veterans. Some have worked through it, others continue to seek help. A lot of veterans are reluctant to share details about their experiences in Vietnam. Some may spend several years talking only with others who had been to Southeast Asia. Though they returned to America safely their battles were far from over. They endured flashbacks, their social lives usually did not go well, sometimes they were diagnosed with sickness and diseases, which they got back in Vietnam. Seeking an escape they often turned to alcohol or sometimes even drugs. Quite a lot of veterans found solace at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington where they mingled with millions of visitors, but there were also those still not ready to view the 250 foot long monument even though they were separated by a distance of four decades. It took approximately ten years after the memorial was dedicated, before they could walk past the 58,000 names carved into the black granite wall.

### **1.3 Trauma nowadays**

Nowadays many people still suffer from trauma, just the causes are different such as difficult childhood, divorce, bullying, abuse, violence and more. These causes are not the trauma, they just create it inside us. It can be observed in books these days, people write more about today's problems as mentioned above. We will scarcely see people to write about war, its effects and such like in the past. Classic wars from the past are diminishing and in their stead there is a new type of warfare called terrorism, changing quite a few things including traumatic events. We could say that 11th September 2001 was the beginning of terrorism and an event that shook the world.

## 2 9/11 NATIONAL TRAUMA

For people in New York 9/11 was a potent experience and transforming event affecting both their physical and mental state. They saw everything: people to die, their bodies falling down from the buildings, the buildings collapsing, chaos, fire and rubble everywhere. For the first time something like this happened on American soil, people did not know what to think, expect and do. It happened so fast and all on sudden. This event shook the entire nation - both people present in New York at that time and those watching or hearing about it in TV, radio or other media. Men, women, elders, adults, teenagers and children. Everyone was in shock, even people who never seemed to show any kind of emotion.

Even in the following months, New Yorkers remained in a fear from another threats, attacks and the lingering trauma. People affected by this traumatic event sought all kinds of help to overcome this horrific experience they received that day and to self-heal. Children were not hit as much as adults. Specifically the smaller ones had basically no clue what happened, better yet how terrible the event was. They were not shaken, terrified, desperate, not knowing what will happen next, whether there will be another terrorist attack, but it was rather shown in a different way.

One of the things people often say about 9/11 is that it was such a beautiful day, which of course was, but how like the mundanity of that observation by repeating it over and over until it has become sort of unavailable. Why do people keep referring to all of this, why do they keep talking about the weather as if the meteorology was somehow significant to the greater scope, which does not, so why does the weather remain so important when people think about that day? Maybe because it is one way to try and find a context for this unexpectedness, the only things, that maybe Americans were really used to prior to this sort of sunny, totally transforming event, were usually natural events. So maybe they have a kind of way of thinking this is a new kind of weather and it occurred in this conventional beautiful space, so if America was or is taking damage, it starts the whole process of some exceptionality. It is not just about the weather though, but also because of this kind of attachment that day which made some people feel this enormous attachment to the life, which is beautiful. So there was not just a diverse group but a sort of a stance, everyone realized how precious life really is and should be reminded of, not just the weather. There was also this disbelief how could that happen when the weather was so beautiful, it was strange, odd.

### 3 LITERATURE DEALING WITH TRAUMA

Literature that deals with trauma can be understood as a means for people to recover from their trauma, not only literature but art as well and more. During and after major events and catastrophes there is a collective unease about how people treat mass death in literature, art. They do not follow how, they simply do not all take probably the luxury of homework inserting God into battles, inventing wars, spilling blood with impunity just because it is fun. The reality has not hung, they are often more and more willing enough to satisfy them but even in fiction even in part. So the question is how do people treat the idea of a national tragedy like not the weapon in art and literature, how do they write about it over the way use of issues, irony continues.

Moreover, how do the literature and art of 9/11 reflect and challenge people's current way of life and their thoughts about the future? The terrorist attacks of that day have forever altered the American landscape, bringing dramatic changes in law and society. Work of writers and artists may help reveal the meaning inherent in these events and their aftermath. Some people use the raw material of history, real people, important events to be constrained by concern for truthfulness by respect for the record and in judicious wave of probabilities and some people create a fiction. As mentioned before each person has a different way of dealing with trauma. Some people manage to recover some not. Some of the books are addressing the subject either by a structure or story. These books examine how those who survived utilize and communicate a pain they have and how often their stories go unheard by others, or are conveniently forgotten. In general one of the genres of poetry is to be sort of unflinching in relation to the extremities that we live under and that maybe some of the smallest consolidation might be found in art generally not just poetry has to do with this unflinching. This sense, the fear is a very dangerous change to keep us free of imagination sort to speak. The whole idea of tragedy or at least part of it which talks about pity and fear seems that the fearfulness is a contaminant, which could help people feel less fearful. Thinking about great questions, for example there is something that happened with the face of death, it makes it possible for the rest of us to not flinch.

Poetry is not always explicitly political, yes there have been some very good explicitly political poems. There are many poems that are political but they are not explicitly political and the kinds of lines people might be interested in are those, which draw some kind of close reading around the ethical political ideas, that it can hate they always pull hard as if they were in different boxes. Any art that can be thought of because of the time in which it

is made and if the artist is attentive to the world, there is going to be a politics, an ethics and hopefully an aesthetics. But trauma is pertinacious; it is anchored in our lives and in the structures of our society. It subsists everywhere and it does not relegate simply because we give way not to see it. Trauma affects everyone, both the offenders and the victims, the consciously blind or the ones seeing very veritable ghosts.

## **II. ANALYSIS**

#### 4 WENDELL BERRY - IN THE PRESENCE OF FEAR

What led Berry to write his book the way he did - rationally, giving facts and suggestions for improvements, no fiction, and what he writes about, is most likely, one of many reasons, his origin and activities. He was born in Henry County, Kentucky. Both his parents, and families of each parent were all farmers, and Berry too continued this tradition and bought a farm. Berry is also an environmental activist and a cultural critic. All these facts are the reason why Berry writes in his book about farmers, the state of their farm, why he questions, criticizes the state of things, the decisions made, but also offers solutions, and why he describes the changing environment. The reason why I believe this book is a good example of 9/11 literature is how Berry conveys facts and information about 9/11 and its aftermath, giving sort of directions to people how to live in those disturbed days that followed the 9/11 event. Moreover, not only does he write about and criticizes problems, situations, but also offers solutions, or at least suggestions for improvement.

The book is divided into three essays. The first one is about 9/11 - a thoughtful critic of the 9/11 tragedy, the second one focuses on local economy - a deeper exploration of the economy, and a criticism of the false promise of prosperity, and the third one talks about "movements" - each movement describing a particular problem, mostly they concern environmental problems.

The thoughts of the book *In the presence of fear* give us a glimpse of the technological and economic optimism that ended on the day of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack. It was based on the claim of a "new world order" and a "new economy" that would "grow" farther and farther, bringing prosperity, but limited to a small percentage of people in the world, and fewer and fewer people even in the United States Member States (based on the oppressive work of poor people around the world and environmental impacts, including global warming, as a normal business cost). There has been a growing global effort for economic decentralization and the events of September 11 make these efforts more necessary than ever. Unfortunately, weapons and war science are available not only to recognized national governments, but also to "dishonest nations" or fanatical groups and individuals. The idea that a global economy, technologically complex and centralized, is invulnerable to terrorism, sabotage or war, and protected by "national defence" is mistaken and misleading.



Berry contemplates how countries have immense machines with a power that is almost unimaginable to humans, applying themselves to the earth in a very destructive way, but those pictures of mountain removal mining represent to Berry is people's willingness to destroy the world. That much of the world as it was given to us is now destroyed forever, there's no conceivable way that it could ever again be what it was or have the value that it originally had, but this destruction is only the most extreme example of people's willingness to destroy.

At the time of the destruction of the World Trade Center Berry had a trip scheduled to San Francisco in the next few days and of course it was called off but it was certainly on his mind and he doesn't like flying much nor machines in general. The morning that happened the radio came home with that news and Berry was dumbfounded and listened.

The important thing is not the particular circumstances, the important is that when a person is scared that person ought to do something about it, there's no point in just sitting and shivering. It still seems that the idea that a domestic airplane loaded with people can be used as a weapon is devastating and it does really very serious damage to people's optimistic assumption that they can make these huge machines and somehow control their effects, well they are not controlling the effects, for instance they are not in the control of the pollution that is coming from economic activities and economic machines that people made, so in some sense the events of 9/11 seemed to stand for the incalculability of technological effects.

If the official people had learned anything, they would have changed the tune and if people have learned anything in the last years, it is that official people very reluctantly changed their tune if a significant number of people had learned anything they would probably have forced a change in the way officials are talking and they have not done that so the events of 9/11 have in any meaningful way registered on the conscience or the consciousness of the people. Yet there was something that gave Berry a hope in the five years after 9/11, that hope being the stirrings of conscience in some people, that the effort is growing and has actually grown in those five years to foster local economies starting with local food economies is hope giving. Berry also thinks that the spread of consciousness in America about a mountaintop removal in the mountains is hope giving, but does not think it tells people that they should be confidently hopeful yet but it certainly tells them what hope is going to look like and it tells them what to hope for. That is how people somehow learn to

curb their violence that they will learn to take appropriate care of all the irreplaceable gifts they have, which cannot survive their carelessness.

Berry also writes about his thoughts like that there will be a time, not so distant, when people will forget about the terrible incident of 9/11, as all things are in a time. Before 9/11 people were living in a new world order and a new growing economy bringing a welfare and prosperity. The presiding politicians, corporate officers and venture capitalists, who did not care about the rest of the world but themselves, resented the idea of the prosperity being limited to only a small amount of people, and that the progress threatens our planet in a long term.

In the advanced nations the free market gained so much influence that it sort of reached the status of a God, and because of this farmers, farm lands and rural communities, their forests, wetlands and prairies, their ecosystems and watersheds all suffered. Universal pollution and global warming became to them a typical cost of doing business, without giving it a second thought. The economy was slowly reaching a crumbling point, and the 9/11 event only made it worse. Berry urges people, especially citizens of industrial countries, to change the course of their actions, and think about the big picture. To recognize it was a bad direction, methods, and that it needs to change.

Over the past several decades the progress and economy were dependent on innovation. They felt it was required and even requisite, that would be more and more, better and better innovations, independent or connected to each other, so that the economy could grow, thus making things better. And so it would happen in the light of continued new innovations, the older things to lose their worth, and be of no use or interest anymore.

People did not foresee that this course of action might backfire at some point, that it can be misused, whether it would be because of a new type of war, or some other reason, or that they would become trapped in the cycle of innovations. Nor did they anticipate that the innovations in warfare could end up in the wrong hands rather than their own for which it was originally intended. These wrong hands being the hands of rogue nations, fanatics, or terrorists.

Here is an example of how Berry describes a situation, its circumstances, and then offers a solution, suggestion. He writes how people believed that economies, and the global economy are immune to sabotage, terrorism, or war, that it is well protected. Now he offers

a choice that people can maintain their current course of action, and keep believing it will work, or create a better system which addresses these issues, and tries to improve them

Berry is also afraid that, besides the imminent threat of more terrorist attacks, people will chose the first option, and continue the course of actions prior to 9/11, without giving second thoughts about the consequences, because it suits them. He talks about officials and ordinary citizens, that they must force, encourage themselves to choose and maintain the second option. Especially the officials should be a leading example, because they are the “body of a state”. It is harder for normal citizens to imagine what is going on in the world in a normal time, or a time of crisis.

He argues that the self-righteousness is a mistake. A mistake is also, as it could be observed from events since September 11, to assume that a government could be engaged in a global economy and while pursuing its own interest. Ever since September 11 many people presumed to speak for others, how they will do anything, sacrifice anything for a better security, since the previous national security was crumbling under the 9/11 attack. Some people probably would but some others would rather have less security than they would have their rights limited. In time of war, conflict, where people hate and hurt each other, it is hard to talk about peace, and even harder to implement it and stop the madness. To find forgiveness.

A similar event for Americans that is hard to forget, and to which is 9/11 often but not well compared, is the attack on Pearl Harbour. If history should teach people something, it is that there have been many wars, none of which has brought a peace. Because the purpose and result of war is not peace but victory. People need to ponder and decide, if they really mean to innovate and prosper, is there not a better way to end war by another war? People are so caught in the conflict that they forget how peace works, how to achieve it, and how to maintain it. What is also sad, and an irony, is that war is more profitable than peace, and countries prosper more in some areas.

People currently have a wrong idea of peace, believing they can take an advantage of less prosperous countries, and at the same time give them weapons, and instruct them of war, and expect a peace. Berry writes that it is a good idea to get to know your enemy, everyone should be familiar with it. And the leaders should take responsibility. He also suggest they should renew their interest in farming, giving it more attention. To promote the ideal of self-sufficiency both at home and abroad. To give people hope. A result of Berry being a farmer. And that people should turn their attention to protecting and preserving natural

resources and environment, because it is important as well. This is a result of Berry being also an environmental activist.

He also criticizes that education is from a big part to be blamed, because it steered from its purpose. That its function is not to serve in the end the industry, but it is for people to allow them to live a decent, responsible lives. To be able to distinguish which things are important, which are less important, or which are not important at all. To set their priorities. A step to a change is to realize that resources are not endless unlike our needs. We need to learn to distribute resources properly, make the most of it, and not to waste unnecessarily. This requires a new economy, that takes into consideration all these things, and implement them in the right way, and efficiently, so that we, humanity, could continue to prosper and make our planet a place worth living in.

It is a very economical essay and it is able to be economical because of many years of other writing in which Berry would be worried about the same issues, so there is something a little reductive about it. It is really a series of points, or rather a numbered sequence of points that exist without their supporting arguments or evidence. It is amazing how current it is and also depressing how current it is. What one hopes for is that these things written out of fear, that the way things are, one would hope they have become obsolete. Berry also mentions, related to this, that the things he has written when he was most scared have stayed current. For example in 1977 he published a book called *The Unsettling of America*, which is basically about what Americans are doing to their farms, their farming people and farmland, and that it has become more pertinent every year since, supposedly being a terrible fate for a writer. Berry points out the book was written in the hope that it would help to make a correction, and so was this essay obviously, written in the hope that it would be a part of a correction, and according to Berry it has failed. It would probably be foolish to expect a sudden change, but one would not be a fool to expect leaders to take notice of obvious problems that is not foolish. To Berry it seems that the American leaders, not a party either, the leadership is guilty now of failing to notice the obvious. As time goes on, Berry became more hopeful. It can be seen that people are trying to take as good care of our planet as they can. It will be a slow, difficult journey, but if they will continue their efforts, it will pay off.

## 5 KEN KALFUS - A DISORDER PECULIAR TO THE COUNTRY

There are quite a few books regarding 9/11, but not many are satiric like *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country*. It may seem bold to write about 9/11 few years after the event and especially when the book is also satiric, but in my opinion it was deliberate, because people need all kinds of literary approaches. Moreover, the novel is about a married couple going through a divorce and we would normally expect, Marshall and Joyce would be happy to see each other alive, but they are actually disappointed by the other one's survival. Why Kalfus decided to write about 9/11 may be because this tragic event affected every American, Kalfus being no exception, also he was born in New York.

The reasons why I believe this novel is a good example of 9/11 literature are several. Firstly, Kalfus uses the 9/11 event as a setting for the story of his book and chose a form of a novel, he also subtly uses a dark humour in the background of the national trauma. Moreover, his characters actually show signs of development and are attractive to readers, they are not just plain characters in a book without any emotions, appeal. Secondly, the 9/11 is a big crisis to capture all, but this book manages it to maintain throughout the whole story, capturing the events, development of the event and its aftermath, along with the two main characters' relationship and divorce. These two go hand in hand throughout the story. Lastly, it is hard to write a good novel only several years after the event, because people still carry the wounds and still have fresh memories, even though this may be one of many reasons why these books have such an audience. In my opinion Kalfus managed to do well in this part. The book is swift and bracing from the very beginning and maintains its tempo until the end.

The setting for this book is New York and its surroundings during the attack of planes at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 and the aftermath. The novel is narrated in third person, with two main characters, and switching a focus between the two of them, or focusing on both at a same time, and one section is narrated from the children's point of view, where they are realizing what is happening between their parents. The characters are described in a neutral way, meaning neither is purely good or evil, they both have their upsides and downsides just like anyone else. It is hard to choose a side between these two, as both of them do things that are acceptable, or understandable, and some things that are not. It is mostly felt when the focus is on one of them, not when they are together, although the feeling is strong as well but in a different way. When the focus is on one of them, you

can feel with him/her and telling to yourself Yes, that is what I would do too, or no, that was too much, I would never have done that.

There is a use of satire which serves as a tool to examine the changes the 9/11 caused in American civil life. Many fictional reactions to 9/11 try to use personal aspects as a means of expressing the state of the nation, Kalfus is no exception, but he uses a twist in addition to it. The satire in Kalfus's novel offers readers a possibility to view different aspects of 9/11 in both serious and comic ways. It also focuses on various issues through his characters feelings, mocks and questions the security of the state. The satirical target at the beginning of the novel throws readers right in the midst of the terrorist attack, planes crashing into the World Trade Center, how the two main characters manage to avoid death and survive, Joyce survives because her flight to San Francisco is cancelled early in the morning that day, and Marshall survives because he was late to work, he had to take care of the children first, and finishing it how each of them is filled with happiness and relief at a thought that the other one perished during the attack. Here is where the story begins to focus more on the relationship between Joyce and Marshall, and their troubles regarding the divorce. This introduction of 9/11 attack and the roles of the two main characters sets a tone for the novel, and continues to record it in a factual and detailed way the following two years after the 9/11 attack.

It is obvious that Harriman family is not a typical American family, which served as a metaphor for patriotism and unity. The members of the family are divided, there is a little comfort, almost no loyalty. Kalfus uses this in a parodic way to link it to the nation and its security, when Joyce begins to question this security after the anthrax incident: “She resented her former belief that their lives in America had been secure. Someone had lied to them as shamelessly as a spouse.”<sup>1</sup> The novel ends in a similar way as it began, with a disturbing, comic incongruity, and at the location of the twin towers in the beginning, and in the end at the same place, which is now only an empty site of where the twin towers used to stand. The ending contains description of how America has won the war quickly and efficiently, how it receives a respect and gratitude for bringing back an order, despite the mockery it received in the beginning of the novel.

There are books that either use the 9/11 tragic event as a main thing, developing throughout the story just like the characters, theme, or there are books that only mention

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<sup>1</sup> Ken Kalfus, *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (New York: Ecco Press, 2006), 32.

the 9/11 briefly, or in some cases not even at all. The case of this novel is the first one. The 9/11 is represented here as a setting for the story, and also as a comparison to the relationship between Joyce and Marshall. The private (fictional) story and the historical (public) one are separated in a way, but they complement each other. The fictional story is narrated as it could happen to real people, and into this fictional story are added real historical facts like the destruction of the twin towers, the anthrax incident, the war in Afghanistan, the occupation of Iraq and so on. But there is nowhere to be found in the novel for example cant or self-regarding weepiness. Also no melodrama, like when Marshall is escaping the twin towers. Marshall as a character is not exaggerated. There is mainly a raw description of the situation and surrounding, as Marshall tries to make his way out of the destroyed south tower. He does not express much, if not any emotions, when there are dead people, human body parts. He even makes fun of it a bit: "He thought of a joke. Ladies and gentlemen, this way to the egress!"<sup>2</sup> When he was almost out of the building, he stopped and contemplated. It seemed for a moment as if his survival instinct did not work fully: "Marshall knew he should go, but he hung back. He wondered about his reluctance, this sudden loss of instinct for his own preservation. It was the divorce, the fucking divorce - he had been beaten down so badly."<sup>3</sup> What is also characteristic for this type of books is, that it tries to separate fact from fiction, to contend with the tragedy, the terrible trauma caused by the attack on that day and the aftermath.

This novel is an excellent example of a hyperbole, for example: "Osama's holed up in Tora Bora."<sup>4</sup>, meaning that Marshall is hidden in his bedroom. He spent a lot of his time there, mainly when Joyce was at home, when she was either in the kitchen cooking meal, or in the living room with the children watching TV - cartoons, or news about the war. There is a connection, a metaphor, between the war in Iraq and Afghanistan and a conflict in marriage between Joyce and Marshall. Joyce and Marshall also so to speak wage a war of terror against each other, turning a normal divorce into a warfare, hypothetically speaking, and in return the conflicts between nations are pretty much similar, work alike, as a very bad divorce. And it makes sense in a way, because many people probably know divorce better than a war in the middle East, so it is easier for them to picture it. Their two children and their friends are caught in the conflict as innocent civilians in a real war. When they presume the other one died during the tragic event, they are happy, because it would mean

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<sup>2</sup> Ken Kalfus, *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (New York: Ecco Press, 2006), 13.

<sup>3</sup> Ken Kalfus, *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (New York: Ecco Press, 2006), 14.

<sup>4</sup> Ken Kalfus, *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (New York: Ecco Press, 2006), 76.

an easy victory, without any efforts, just like in a real war. As the U.S. increases its attacks against terrorism, so do the attacks between Joyce and Marshall. And like in the real war they both use tactics and practices to destroy each other.

Marshall is hidden in his bedroom and uses a guerrilla tactics, making swift, calculated attacks to weaken Joyce. Most of the times however, their attacks end in a failure. “He plotted; she knew it. Marshall worked stealthily, finding allies among distant acquaintances and family; he passed damaging gossip untraceably; he undermined Joyce's resolve by preempting her complaints with mirror-image accusations. Nothing in her life was beyond his reach: even her father had made an obliquely critical comment that suggested he had heard something somehow unfavourable to her, but the presumed charge was too vague to be contested. Marshall spoke rudely to her colleagues when they telephoned with important messages, which he never passed on. He resumed leaving the toilet seat up, his straight razor soapy and wet at the edge of the basin, and his underwear on the bathroom floor; all habits she had exorcised from the household years ago. He was making remarks to the kids; she heard their echoes in their questions at bedtime: Why do you look so old? Why don't you like Snuffles? Snuffles was the dog, a slobbering, stinking, slackstearing instrument in Marshall's campaign against her, a war fought in the shadows.”<sup>5</sup> One of the major attacks is a sabotage of a wedding of Joyce's sister by stealing the chuppah: “The chuppah was picked up by a member of your wedding. They signed for it!; It's written right here. Harriman. Morris ...Moishe ...Marshall! There's no one there named Marshall Harriman?”<sup>6</sup> Another thing Marshall does is that he buys a listening device to spy on Joyce. This listening device and getting information out of the children, it is how he learned about the wedding and began plotting how to sabotage it. And Joyce is trying to find means how to ruin Marshall both on financial and personal level. For example, she sleeps with Roger, who is a friend of both Joyce and Marshall, in order to hurt Marshall and to ruin a relationship of Linda and Roger for stopping to communicate with Joyce. The reason why Linda and Roger ceased to communicate with Joyce is Marshall's doing of spreading rumours about Joyce, one of his many attacks against Joyce. But it turns out that Roger has his own agenda, and sleeps with Joyce in order to hurt Linda, because their relationship is not going well, and after this Joyce began to think of every relationship as a conspiracy: “We wanted it, she said, returning to Roger. We both wanted it. Her voice was

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<sup>5</sup> Ken Kalfus, *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (New York: Ecco Press, 2006), 6.

<sup>6</sup> Ken Kalfus, *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (New York: Ecco Press, 2006), 124-125.



choked, a bit husky. That cunt, he said, gasping. She had it coming! It had been accomplished: this stain on Linda's marriage as sure as the one on Marshall's bedspread. But wait a minute, what did he mean when he said, She had it coming? Who did, Linda? Why? How? So caught up in her divorce, she had hardly wondered about the state of Roger and Linda's marriage. What were exactly the circumstances that made him capable of doing this? She didn't know. She didn't know a goddamn thing. She hadn't spoken to Linda in a year and had no knowledge of what had she done to Roger? As she lay there, staring at the ceiling, she knew she had not seduced Roger at all. He had his own reasons for making love to her, something to do with Linda. She had seen him as a pawn in her struggle against Marshall, but each person had his own tragic secret history. Every human relationship was a conspiracy. Roger, too, was working in the shadows, for his own survival, against his own enemies and friends of enemies.”<sup>7</sup> Another attack of Joyce against Marshall was in regard to the anthrax incident. It begins with Joyce taking a look at the letter that came along with the envelope containing a white powder, supposedly anthrax, but later turns out it was just a baby powder, a hoax. Nevertheless, some of the letters in the letter, mainly a letter g, strongly remind her of Marshall's handwriting. When she is with an FBI agent, she tells him about this: “Agent Robbins, she began, and wondered if she could go on. She thought for a moment and decided she could. You asked if there was anyone who might have a grudge against our company. And I can't think of anyone who does. But I know who has a grudge against *me*: my husband. I told you yesterday, we're getting divorced, it's an ugly situation. He was in the World Trade Center September 11 and survived, but, I don't know, he's seemed a bit disturbed since then. September 11 may have sent him over the edge. He may have done this to get back at me somehow. And that envelope shown on the news last night... Do you have a copy? I know my husband's handwriting. We'll see. What's his name? Marshall Harriman.”<sup>8</sup> After it turned out to be a hoax, and it was just a baby powder, her suspicion about Marshall being the one who sent the envelope deepens even more when she discovers in the bathroom a baby powder: “From the top shelf, spinning end-over-end, a container of baby powder dropped into her hands. She captured it cleanly. She never bought baby powder; she had read once that talc was suspected of being carcinogenic. She never caught things in midair either. This meant something, she thought. *Johnson ad Johnson's*; well of course it was

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<sup>7</sup> Ken Kalfus, *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (New York: Ecco Press, 2006), 88-89.

<sup>8</sup> Ken Kalfus, *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (New York: Ecco Press, 2006), 43-45.

Johnson and Johnson's, everyone bought Johnson and Johnson's, but still-"<sup>9</sup> The failure in this attack is that it was someone else who sent the envelope, and that the baby powder in the bathroom was for a rash that Marshall had.

There is a clear intention to show a connection between domestic and international suspicion and vengeance. This suggestion of a national lunacy is shown in the book where Joyce receives emails from her colleagues in the evening during an invasion to Iraq. They write to her in the emails asking if America became crazy and whether they are fooled by propaganda. The personal aspects and political ones constantly entwine. Meanwhile the two children develop a game pretending they are at the World Trade Center, a porch serves as a substitute for a tower, and jumping off it while holding hands. Joyce and Marshall are so caught in their vengeful attacks and plots that they do not notice what their children do. Until a moment when Viola gets hurt during one of the jumps because Victor did not hold her hand properly: "It's because of Victor!; He let go!; The World trade Center was on fire and we had to jump off together! But he let go of my hand!"<sup>10</sup> But even this does not seem to shock Joyce, what her children have been playing.

The 9/11 tragedy caused every American to feel like they all have been personally attacked by the terrorists. They all considered themselves victims. One might say it was a patriotic thing, but after giving it some thought, is it not a bit delusional to think something like this? After all, there is a difference between being killed and not. But that did not stop Americans from believing otherwise. Everyone thought they had been intimately involved when the twin towers fell. Whether it was that their flight has been cancelled and they have to wait, or they have loved ones in New York, or simply hearing, watching the news and thinking Oh that could have been me in the tower.

Another thing following 9/11 is that people in New York take pleasure in so called "terror sex", meaning that they want to go in a bed with someone who survived, escaped the two towers, or with people on emergency duty like firemen. Joyce too was contemplating about it. While Joyce believes that she has attained this new intercourse, she later finds out during a humiliating situation that her husband has a much older motive. Because Marshall throws into disorder a bachelor party held by Neal, who is a fiancé of Joyce's sister, and his brother and friends, where Marshall is linking together American and Israeli governments. This is linked to a previously mentioned sabotage of the wedding.

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<sup>9</sup> Ken Kalfus, *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (New York: Ecco Press, 2006), 48-49.

<sup>10</sup> Ken Kalfus, *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (New York: Ecco Press, 2006), 114.

The novel is a deeper reflection on the understanding and state of America's modern history. In addition to general examples of overlapping personal and political implications, we see a parallel between suspicion and revenge in the international one based on the event after September 11 and the gradual transition to the Iraq war. We can assume that the war in Iraq could have been unintended caused by some inexplicable decisions, yet the September 11 attacks set the situation around Iraq moving up to Iraq's decisive accusation of chemical weapons production only on the grounds of a rigged informant, which is confirmed by the fact that even one can take into account the fates of other people without being punished for this responsibility. That is to take on the role of man - God who did not lie, but just did not tell the truth.

Kalfus invites the black humour to compare religious and cultural hatred with personal suffering through international events. 1. Jihad hatred versus divorce versus family struggle against terrorist attacks on the WTC, invasion of Iraq, and war in Afghanistan. 2. The perception of the sequence of events: Delay - return to work - enthusiasm for the idea of "what would be" - attack - broken bodies - an effort to save others - self-exhaustion. The book explores hostility in its various forms and evokes global despair. It compares the dream of a happy marriage to the political fantasy of a world enhanced by war. The main idea of terrorists is to provoke fear and pressure, which they must not succumb to. Terrorism is not negotiated and only the continuation of life to date, the expression of disagreement and struggle, including the passing on of history to future generations, is the answer to not succumb to this pressure.

## 6 COMPARISON

The two books I have chosen both describe dealing with trauma in their own special way. I felt it would be better to choose two completely different books about 9/11, rather than two similar ones. Of course, both different and similar books have their uses, but the choice of two non-identical books was more appealing. Berry's book is a rational analysis, giving providing real facts, there are no characters, or fiction. On the other hand, Kalfus's book uses fiction, there are characters, is aesthetic, and is in a form of a novel. Also each author comes from a different environment. Berry grew up in the countryside, while Kalfus in a city. Both books have the same purpose, to offer an insight into 9/11, how to overcome this trauma caused by 9/11, but different ways and a different subject. Berry describes his experience and thoughts in his book, which is divided into three essays, while Ken Kalfus expresses himself through fictional story and characters set during this event, the book is divided into several chapters, each named after a month in a year. Berry wrote *In the Presence of Fear* in order to collect his thoughts and make as much sense as possible, because he believes that this seems to be the proper antidote to fear, to dig in and make as much sense as possible, that was the reason for writing it, because Berry was badly scared for a good many reasons, chiefly scared about what people are doing to the country itself although what is happening to the nation seems sufficiently frightening. People believed in a homeland security but were proven wrong.

What both books have also kind of in common is the idea that one of the most serious threats to us now are terrorist attacks. This is why rhetoric must be replaced by thought, defended by both civil servants and citizens in a national crisis. It is difficult for ordinary citizens to know what is really happening and what we hear from politicians, bureaucrats and commentators tends to reduce the complex problems we are now facing in terms of unity, security and retaliation. Events since September 11 have shown that the government can support and participate in the global economy while acting exclusively in its own interest (for example abolishing international treaties regardless of morality and cooperation at international level). Since September 11, many public voices have believed that Americans would readily accept a reduction in freedom in exchange for greater "security". The goal and outcome of war is not necessarily peace, but victory, and any victory that has won violence, necessarily justifies the violence it has received and leads to further violence.

The September 11 attack is still and will be in vivid memory not only as the beginning of the global fight against terrorism. Today, every one of us feels the effects in our daily lives (increased controls, cost of measures and prevention, etc.). In addition to the thousands of casualties, human tragedies and consequences, this day for New York also meant the loss of one of its distinctive landmarks. Two World Trade Center Towers. Tons of debris were only taken away from it at the end of May 2002, and the empty space was given the name Ground Zero (an expression that was originally used in connection with atomic bomb testing). The Ground Zero epicentre today is the National September 11 Memorial with a reverent atmosphere that will leave no one cold. These are two huge pools that follow the foundations of the Twins (the names of 2983 victims are engraved on the bronze edge of these pools, not only those who died during the 2001 terrorist attack, but also during the 1993 World Trade Center garages) charge of dynamite). The Memorial Museum is also a memorial to the terrorist attacks. The memorial was unveiled on the tenth anniversary of the terrorist attacks. Around the monument, dozens of trees are planted as symbols of peace. One of them is the Survivor Tree, and today it symbolizes the story of survival and resilience, so important in the history of September 11, as well as the literature referring to a sequence of events that helps manage and overcome trauma as it adds strength and determination to fight terrorism for future generations. Nowadays, a generation has grown up that does not remember the course of the attacks, and it is not only necessary to maintain a reference to one of the blackest days of American history.

## CONCLUSION

In this thesis were addressed and described trauma in general and trauma in literature using a memorable event of September 11 and a comparison to other similar events in the past. Moreover, a choice of two novels was applied to demonstrate trauma and relevant events. In the first book, *In the Presence of fear*, it is written about real life experience of the September 11, describing an impact of this terrible event on the USA and the world. Writing about problems and offering solutions. The second book uses fictional characters who were in New York when the planes crashed into the World Trade Center and writes how it affected their lives, both the main characters and characters around them.

Firstly, trauma was described and explained. What it is, how it comes to be, what can cause it, what the symptoms are, how to deal with it and what the consequences are to have a better idea of what is talked about. In a connection to this, its origin was explored, describing a shell shock that appeared during the WWI, and the Vietnam War and soldiers returning home.

Following this is an analysis of an evolution of trauma in the past and nowadays. The concept of trauma and how it is perceived remains pretty much same, only the events and conditions slightly differ, and so do all sorts of ways how to deal with the trauma. Trauma does not affect only individuals, but also groups of people, and even a nation. The last one is the case of 9/11 being American national trauma, as everyone was shocked and surprised by that event.

This thesis also describes literature dealing with trauma as one of many ways of dealing with trauma. A form of self-care in a way. The literature helps not only readers, who read a book and gain some comfort, understanding and so, but also the author of the book, who describes the events and expresses himself/herself.

Lastly, is an analysis of the two chosen books, why they are a good example. What led the authors to write these books, their thoughts, motives, circumstances. Then what is focused on in the books, what do they represent and convey.

Literature is definitely a considerable influence in the people's life. It has a strong language to depict the inner world of man, and it helps people in recovering from their trauma, their self-care. People had positive thoughts and comments after reading one of the two books, myself included. After reading these two chosen books, and the analysis, it was found out, that the literature dealing with trauma does indeed help people in a way, meaning it also

depends on a type of person, and a type of book, some books fail to capture the event and content, others are an excellent example that is a pleasure to read. These two books are definitely a good example of literature dealing with trauma and 9/11 literature. For some people it is enough, for others is not and they still require additional help. However, the idea is this literature helps people.

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